11: Hamilton G-3 (ca. 1942)1942 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

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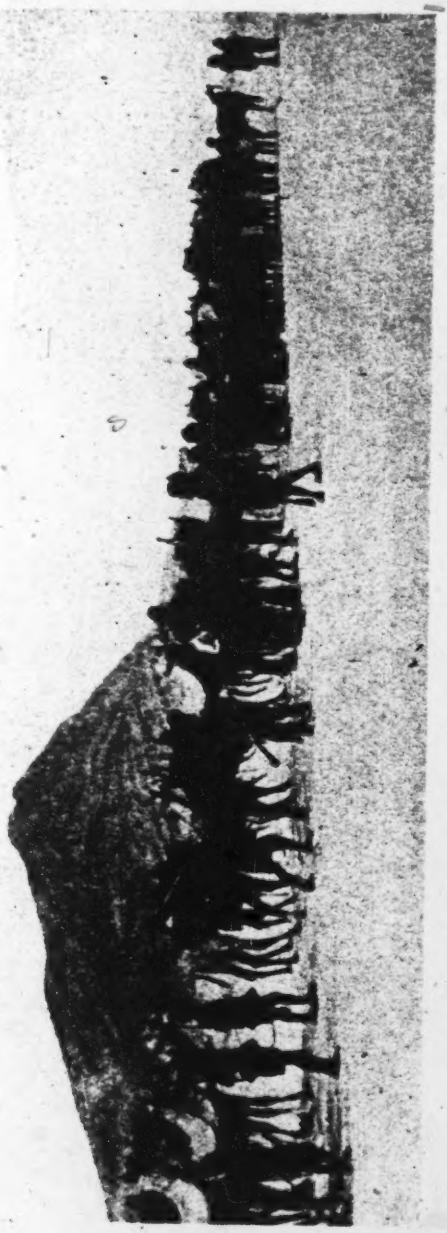

FIG. 1.—THE GREETING CEREMONY: A TRIBESMAN WELCOMES THE VISITORS.

p. 85(A)

ll: Hamilton G-3 (ca. 1942)1942 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

000 **A GREETING CEREMONY IN THE ADEN PROTECTORATE.**
R. A. B. Hamilton. Illustrated.

P. 88 (B)

5764 **44** Certain tribes of the Aden Protectorate, in particular the Aulaqis, perform a peculiar greeting ceremony called the *Móqab*. When visitors of importance approach a settlement, word of their coming is sent on ahead, and the men of the settlement turn out to receive them. They parade in a long line on some convenient piece of flat ground in front of their forts, with the leading men and important guests in
[534] the centre. On the appearance of the visitors a drum is usually beaten, and shots are exchanged in salute. The Bú Obeid consider it complimentary to shoot as close to the visitors as possible, but most of the tribes have the sense to fire straight up into the air.

P. 88 (C)

11: Hamilton G-3 (ca. 1942)1942 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

576 When the visitors come near they dismount, form a line with the most important men in the centre, advance to a distance of about fifty yards [411] from the 'home side,' and halt. They then load their rifles, adjust their garments, and wait for the ceremony to begin. The men of the 'home side' now spring forward, usually in couples holding hands, and, uttering war cries, form themselves into a long column, with the most important men in front. The column moves towards the visitors, but it is led in wheels and circles, so that at no time is it directly approaching them. If the principal men are not in front, it indicates that some at least are not disposed to give the visitors a very cordial welcome.

576 A tribesman now separates himself from the
587 'home side' and, very fast and in a loud voice,
533 declaims verses which he has composed (fig. 1). If these are not accepted by his companions he declaims others, until acceptance is indicated by cries of 'Yallah.' He then begins to intone the first half of his verses in a chant peculiar to the occasion, and is followed by the leading half of the column. The second half of the verses is chanted by the second half of the column. When the poet is satisfied that the words are being sung correctly by all, he resumes his place in the column and joins in the singing. The column has meanwhile continued to wheel and circle (fig. 2).

576 The visitors can judge, from the words sung,
533 whether their welcome is a hearty one, or not. These words are not always polite, and the

576 greatest interest in them is displayed by the
533 visitors, not only because they must soon reply in kind, but also because upon them may depend whether the visitors remain to feast and spend the night or whether, with unpleasant smiles and covert insults, they will move off to sleep elsewhere. On one occasion in Hâdhina the greeting song opened with the words—'It is only through 'our politeness that you have crossed the boun-'daries of Hâdhina.' These words, and a rapid count which showed that over half the 'home side' were in the forts, led to suspicion, and caused the visitors to extend their line until all semblance of ceremony was lost. But if the words are pleasant, an atmosphere of friendliness
576 is quickly established. The men of the 'home
411 side' eventually file past the principal visitors, often firing their rifles and 'salaaming', and wheel back into their original line.

P·89(B)

000 often firing their rifles and 'salaaming,' and wheel back into their original line.

176 The visitors now go through the same procedure, until they too file past their principal hosts and reform their line. The principal men of the 'home side' now advance and are met in the centre, between the two lines, by the principal visitors. The two sides move in single file and greet each other, without speaking, by clasping right hands, raising them to face level, and giving them a good hearty sniff, half sniff and half kiss; the hands on meeting are slapped hard together. On no account is the thumb held, as by the Yemenis and Somalis; this is considered indecent.

The principal men of both sides now face each other, and the usual verbal greetings are given,

576 but it is a hard and fast rule that no news shall be given. The sheikh and ten men may have been killed in a blood feud the day before, but the answer to the question : ' Any news ? '—which is invariably asked—is always given in the formula —' There is no news, and nothing has been ' started, and nothing has been destroyed, and ' no one has said anything to anybody.'

This flat denial of news ends the ceremony. The visitors, if they are staying, hand over their rifles to their hosts, and are led by the left hand into the village, where they drink the bitter infusion of coffee-husk, flavoured with ginger. Conversation then becomes normal, and news is exchanged.

576 This greeting ceremony, as performed by the
537 Aulaqi tribesmen, with its long and rather

p. 89 (D)
[text continued on p. 90(A)]

11: Hamilton G-3 (ca. 1942) 1942 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

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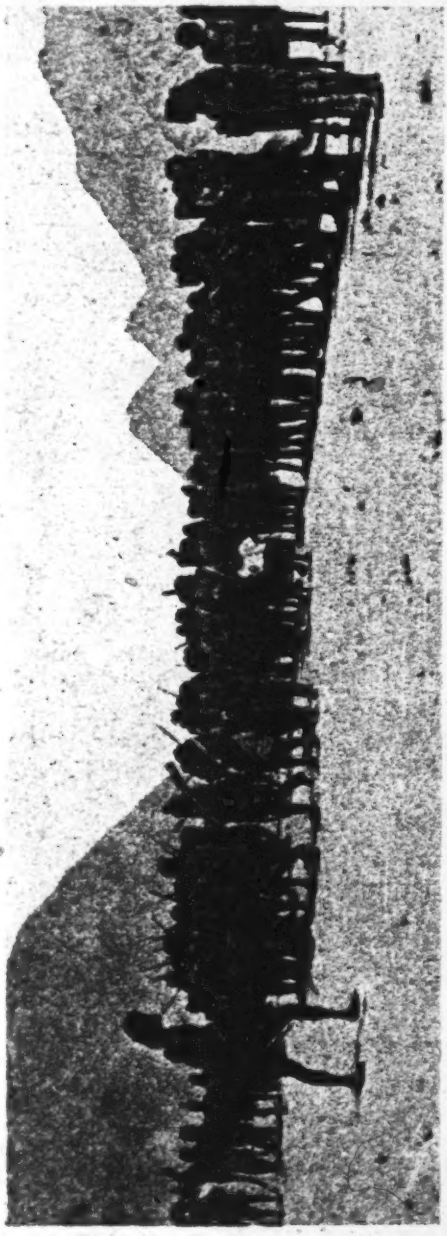
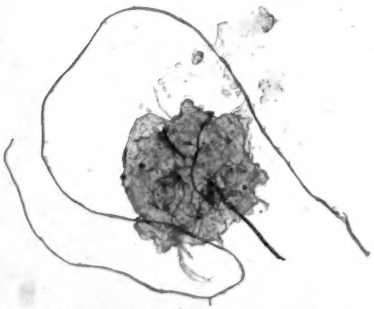


FIG. 2.—THE 'HOME SIDE' WHEELS AND CIRCLES TO THE POET'S CHANT.

P·89 (E)



576 monotonous chant, has considerable dignity, but
587 as performed by the Qaramish, at a fast and ungainly run, it strikes one as laughable.

576 The most remarkable feature about the ceremony as a whole is the twisted path taken by the singers, for the more the leaders wheel and turn,

P. 90 (A)

576 the better it is considered. A hundred men or more in file, wheeling and circling in this way, present a very snake-like appearance, and such is admitted to be the intention, though no reason is given for it.

P·90 (B)